

DID YOU KNOW?

An estimated **17.9 million** adults in the U.S. have disorders of the voice. Many people use their voices for their work. Singers, teachers, telemarketers, lawyers, broadcast journalists, sales people, and public speakers are those at greatest risk.

Taking care of your voice can help you avoid voice problems and disorders.



The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) supports research to understand diseases and conditions that can harm the voice and to test new ways to diagnose, treat, or cure voice disorders.



NIDCD-funded research is exploring **how the brain controls the muscles and nerves** to produce the human voice. These findings may help the development of better treatments for voice disorders.



NIDCD-funded research is seeking to determine whether **voice therapy improves voice-related quality of life for children with vocal fold nodules**, small noncancerous growths that form within or along vocal folds.



NIDCD-funded researchers are also looking at new ways to **assess vocal disorders and testing new methods of voice therapy.**

What causes voice problems?



- Upper respiratory infections
- Acid reflux, heartburn, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), or laryngopharyngeal reflux (LPR)
- Vocal misuse and overuse
- Growths on the vocal folds
- Cancer of the larynx
- Neurological diseases
- Psychological trauma

You may have a voice problem if you answer “yes” to any of these questions:



- Has your voice become hoarse or raspy?
- Have you lost your ability to hit some high notes when singing?
- Does your voice suddenly sound deeper?
- Does your throat often feel raw, achy, or strained?
- Has it become an effort to talk?
- Do you find yourself repeatedly clearing your throat?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, you may want to talk to your physician.



Tips To Prevent Voice Problems



Maintain a healthy lifestyle and diet. Exercise regularly and get enough rest.



Stay hydrated: Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day.



Use a humidifier in your home during winter or if the air indoors is very dry—30% humidity is recommended.



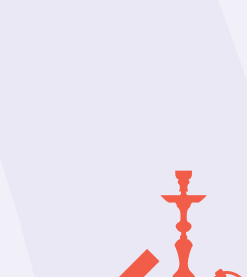
Eat plenty of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, and avoid spicy foods.



Use a salt water solution if you choose to gargle.



Limit your intake of alcohol or caffeine and medications that dry out the vocal folds.



Don't smoke and avoid second-hand smoke.



Avoid mouthwash containing alcohol or irritating chemicals.



Use your voice wisely and try not to speak or sing when your voice is hoarse or tired.



Avoid cradling the phone to prevent muscle tension in your neck.



Rest your voice when you are sick. Avoid screaming or whispering.



Use a microphone, when necessary, in exhibit areas, classrooms, or exercise rooms.



Practice good breathing techniques when singing or talking.



Avoid talking in noisy places.



Talk to your physician about ways to prevent heartburn, GERD, or LPR.



Consider voice therapy with a speech-language pathologist to treat voice problems.



National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

www.nidcd.nih.gov



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